

FARTICUS



Weii, no. It's actually

SPARTACUS

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Who cut the cheese?

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Iceland



A week in Iceland on its famous “circle tour,” a thousand-mile trip over stark, beautiful vistas of snow and lava, with stops at picturesque villages, hot pools, a fabulous lava show, stunning geysers, terrific waterfalls. That was the highlight of life since the last issue of *Spartacus*, and the reason I’ve been so exhausted in the weeks since.

I’ve written an account which I have just now sent to eFanzines, so if you want to hear about my being physically carried from the shuttle train at Newark Airport and/or sharing an 8-hour plane ride with 35 gorgeous Scandinavian

cheerleaders, seek ye the word there. Yes, my Parkinson’s was a constant nuisance, but the flight over Greenland and the drive around Iceland overwhelmed it. And Gawd! The food!

One question abides. Is there an Icelandic fandom? Our schedule was cramped – as cramped as the plane seats, which reminded me of toothpaste tubes, with us as unfluoridated Colgate – and we had *no* free time. But I would have loved to have met some SFers for lunch *en route*.

Seattle? Health and wealth, health and wealth ...

Trump trial

I more than hope that I’m misjudging Donald Trump’s “hush money” trial, in its last stages in these latter days of May, but I think the orange-utan goombah might walk. The prosecution has established a slimy arrangement between Trump’s cadre and the porn star’s, but Trump’s personal involvement is attenuated and simply *not clear*. I would convict, but I’m a blooded trial lawyer used to convoluted cases. The jury numbers lawyers among its number, but God knows what they think and how much influence they have over the other jurors – and God alone also knows whether they believe Michael Cohen or think his evidence trivial or false.

Depressing conclusion: “Farticus” –so named because he’s been expressing himself flatulently at the defense table – dances free. What effect an acquittal would have on the presidential contest I shudder to guess: Trump would surely claim martyrdom and milk it for all his creditors are worth. Our people ... would we lap it up, or see him for what he is?

So what if he wins? I’d say, look at what he’s said he’ll do in that horrifying eventuality, but Trump talks without thinking and doesn’t speak truthfully at any time. We can but guess at the shape of a second Trump administration based on his actions and what we know of his character – if the distorted mess of confusion, bigotry, narcissism and malice he carries around on his shoulders can be called character. There we see a callous, selfish brute, without curiosity,

empathy, depth or knowledge – and my fear is that, as usual with our presidential choices, we're looking into a mirror.

SCOTUS

Some talking head on MSNBC mentioned a terrible truth about the possibility of a second Trump reich – more toadies appointed to the Supreme Court (and lower courts). Trump is mortal, but the Law is much less so. Talk about the fundamentals of American society ... those black-robed assassins could change them for the rest of this century, and the next. The chaos that has resulted from the revocation of reproductive rights would resound with attacks on marital choice, voting rights, restrictions on executive power ...

Campus anti-Semitism

A huge concern this spring has been the collegiate protests over Israel's conduct of the war against Hamas in Gaza, and the spread of their focus to a general anti-Semitism. We see Jewish kids expressing fear and resentment even at hot-ticket Ivy League and athletically oriented universities. Clearly this is unjust.

On the day I started Berkeley in 1967 I noted a message scrawled in chalk on a campus driveway: **U.S. is whitewashing Israel's sins.** So middle eastern turmoil is no stranger to colleges here. I don't recall much fooforaw on the subject in my time there, though; Vietnam and the draft were foremost on our minds. With no imminent threat to themselves, it may be surprising that college kids are so ardent in their passions about Gaza – it well could be that the common and often desperate instinct of youth to *matter* is coming into play.

That is healthy and to an extent, I'm with them. Of course I don't blame Israel for seeking justice, vengeance, and security after the obscenity of October 7th. Hamas' attack was utterly beyond the pale – a crime against civilized humanity, deserving of any retribution Israel could visit upon it. But *focused, disciplined, limited* and *careful* retribution, made with absolute consideration for the lives of innocents. Netanyahu's philosophy is none of those things. He is reckless, hypocritical, brutal, dangerous. Opposing him, specifically, strikes me as just.

But embracing Hamas slogans like "From the river to the sea" is the opposite of just. Like the tearing down of free-this-hostage posters, which we've seen video of, it's an undeniable anti-Israel, anti-Semitic act. And that makes it intolerable in our society. Criminal acts are not protected by our sacred First Amendment. Such demonstrations are straining that line.

Dog murder by SD governor Kristi Noem

Surely you know of Kristi Noem, the MAGA governor of South Dakota, who recently made her pitch for Trump's running mate spot with her tale of shooting a young dog. She said she was trying to train him as a hunter and the critter was just too happy and playful. Later she changed that description to charge that the animal was a killer and untrainable; this after she became the most loathed woman in America.

Noem was obviously trying to show Trump and his legion of pinheads that she was tough and decisive. What she actually showed all of mankind was that she was both cruel and stupid, myopically incapable of reading public sentiment ... Oh, to Hell with her and to Hell with Trump. If a citizen who supports such brutes wants to talk about his anger, I'm here, but if not ...

Sheila

Our much-loved SFPA Sista and perennial convention volunteer **Sheila Strickland** crossed over in a Baton Rouge LA hospice on May 9th. Inoperable cancer had afflicted her for more than a year, a challenge the sweet, quiet, strong librarian met with dignity, honesty and courage. There have been several tributes posted on Facebook, citing Sheila's indefatigable work on local conventions and bids. I can add a story. SFPAnS know it, but general fandom hasn't heard it. Until now.

The Southern Fandom Press Alliance, formed in 1961, is of course an amateur press organization. Its members provide fanzines to their fellows through bimonthly mailings administered, collated and mailed by an Official Editor. I've done the job four times, successfully and un-, and as our mailings have run between 300-400 pages in the past several years, can testify truthfully that it can be an onerous job. So when the incumbent OE announced at a DeepSouthCon that he had no intention of accepting another term, finding his successor became a priority among members there assembled. No veteran of the office was interested, so it fell to a long-time SFPAn, myself, to act.

Sheila was sitting in the DSC hotel lobby, minding her own business. Up slithered GHLLIII, a vile smile eating its way across my face. "Hi! Sheila! What you doin'? What's that you're drinking? Want a refill? How about a sandwich? Your room paid for? A new car?"

For some reason Sheila, who was no fool, suspected something was Up, and of course it was. But! Ever the willing volunteer, the good lady accepted the challenge. Even in as ego-stuffed and contentious a krewe as SFPA, her OEShip was a model of smooth sailing and good vibes.

Sheila was one of that undervalued and mostly unrecognized legion of SFers who work on cons and fannish projects without reward, handling busywork, keeping things going. Without them, our hobby would be left to pompous egos like myself, preening and posing. (Perhaps that's a trifle harsh.) She was here for love of the genre and love of the fandom, and we'd be helpless without them. Above all that, she was herself a fine, patient person, and we'd certainly be unlucky to be without them.

So long, Sista Sheila. I'm proud to have known you.



THE LOC NESS MONSTER

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Good to hear you're continuing with *Zine Dump*, helping zinesters make connections.

LOCs on the latest TZD will follow these.

Regarding *Spartacus* #72 you mentioned some psychiatrists think Trump in the throes of dementia. Add that to his ignorance and it's obvious he's not qualified to even be a dogcatcher. [*That's Kristi Noem's job.*] For example he

has stated that magnets don't work in water. To quote: "Now all I know about magnets is this: Give me a glass of water. throw it on the magnets, you totally short out the system."

This is a man who claimed he had the intelligence to become a scientist. Dunning-Kruger effect anyone?

Some media outlets have been criticized for not making the public aware of the threat to democracy if Trump is elected, following the limits of bothsidesism/objectivity. The ideal should be fairness, getting the facts right, not believing that two sides always have equal validity.

As for the Hugos and the unfair disqualifications of some potential finalists – what do you expect when dealing with the Chinese government? If you want fairness then don't sell out to authoritarian regimes.

I've heard nothing new in re Chengdu; after the initial brouhaha, with its attendant chatter, censures, resignations, action on the scandal seems to have ceased. I welcome correction and updates.



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Many thanks for *Spartacus* 72. I see at the beginning of this that you and Rosy might be in Iceland, so perhaps it's the right time to respond. Taylor Swift has been in the right place at the right time, which currently makes her the world's most popular billionaire. More after I escape this paragraph...

Ah, that's better. Orange Monster opens his mouth everywhere, and all kinds of indefensible things fall out. Even some of his supporters must be WTFing here and there, even though there seems many more that see all of those lies as gospel.

Augh, Hugos. Have we figured it all out? Did the committee act as a way to not run afoul of the Chinese government, and therefore go too far? To prevent the further rending of hair, let's look forward to transparency from the Glasgow Hugo committee. We all have our episodes, and about all we can do is do better next time.

My letter...a seventh friend has joined the neverending list of those who have left our group, often with the hastening of cancer. Found out just this morning. Gotta send out the memo again, no more of this dying...

Heath Row's letter...I would certainly like to see *Amazing Stories* as a publication again, and in this day and age, a .pdfed publication that could be printed on demand. As some have pointed out, rather pointedly, we need to raise money through subscriptions. This is entirely up to Kermit Woodall and Steve Davidson; my job is to get the best writing for the website. I have been warned that creating a subscription-based magazine would close to triple my workload, and I say bring it on. Then, I will truly learn more about producing a magazine.

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My custom in recent years has been to download the [Hugo] finalists, whether through the Hugo packet or by purchasing the e-books, and reading as many of them as I can before the voting deadline. Last year I purchased *Babel* with the anticipation that it would be one of the finalists. I was disappointed when I did not see it on the list, especially after reading the six finalists and realizing that I would have voted it ahead of all of them. Since I did not read anywhere that the author had declined the nomination, I just figured that it finished 7th or 8th in the nomination round.

I never occurred to me that the administrators disqualified it because it MIGHT offend the Chinese authorities. Then I read that they threw out many ballots because they looked like slate voting. Did it not occur to them that the voters are quite capable of using the NO AWARD option like they did in 2015? Since I already have a supporting membership to Glasgow, I am going to continue my participation, but I am questioning whether to continue after this year.

Although the voting process was corrupted, as you said, I did not consider that any of the finalists were so bad that the NO AWARD option was justified.

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OPINIONS AND BLATHER. Are we Americans patriotic whether we know it or not? I doubt that. However, enough are so we have kept this nation running. Is Trump an idiot? He knows very well how to be a rabble rouser; and a good chunk of America is ready to be rabble roused. Trump wanted the insurrection to succeed. However, after the Virginia militia came and starting dispersing the crowd, he allowed the DC militia to help. On the other hand, he has convinced many Americans that whenever he was being prosecuted, it was really persecution.

Fortunately, actors who play violent roles are not always violent, unlike David Soul. My sister found Tom Cruise was a nice guy when she met him; and she didn't feel there was any problem in making him wrinkle free.

I have no idea what you're talking about, but I've met a slough of actors. I liked Dennis Hopper (see previous page) and Keith Carradine very much, thought Woody Allen and Kevin Costner were jerks and would gladly allow Sissy Spacek to ram an M-80 firecracker up my nose any time she wanted. A cool lady!

"L" IS FOR LETTERS. RICHARD LYNCH. I have too many books too. Many I purchased as references needed to write a 'masterpiece' on witchcraft during the three century witch scare. I enjoyed them but could never figure out what I wanted to write. They would have covered a 3 foot by 4 ½ foot book shelf.

MYSELF. Ever since Watergate, the Republicans have been hoping for a Democratic Watergate. They haven't been too successful even when they lied.

LLOYD PENNEY. No, I was being honest that I hope you succeed. You're talented and some success should come of it.

[BACK TO YOU, GUY.] I know only too well that it's easy to get overloaded with projects. You have to cut one or the other. Right now I'm putting a lot of projects on hold or doing project lite.

At our age, none of us can escape the medical profession totally. I did partially with glasses. I lost my set of glasses that cost me \$500 while I was undergoing medical tests. I'm sure I left it in one of the bags I was given to put my clothes in – and it was thrown out. However, I got two sets of glasses from Zenni recently. What you have to do is have your prescription and measure your nose.

I'll just let that remark sit there.

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I fully believe Trump when he says he will be a dictator on Day One if elected president of the United States this November. I believe him when he says he will seek vengeance against all Democrats and those who do not support him. I believe him when he says he will arrest and jail all immigrants on the Southern border (and elsewhere). I believe him when he says he will shut down *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, MSNBC, CNN and any other media that goes against him. I believe Trump when he says he will tell Putin to invade any country he wants to. I believe Trump when he vows to pull out of NATO. I believe Trump when he says he most likely will enforce a national 15-week abortion ban. I believe Trump when, after getting a huge campaign donation from the CEO of TikTok, said he will allow China to continue to operate it. I believe Trump. That alone is enough to keep me frightened.

Quite a photo of you all taped up for a sleep study. Hope it helped.

Not a bit. They lost my results, so I have no idea what the miserable test showed, and they still want to get paid. Can you say "Porco cane!"?

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"Some streaming recommendations ... Gary Oldman's *Slow Horses* returned with a great story about internal turmoil within the U.K.'s MI-5, very different, very taut, very good. I wish they'd hasten Oldman's return to MI-6, their foreign secret service, for the next LeCarre thriller, *Smiley's People*." Everyone keeps forgetting that there's a [LeCarre] book in there between *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy* and *Smiley's People*. It's *The Honourable Schoolboy*. While it's not directly about Smiley's nemesis Karla, it's still an interesting story. I'll also note again that I think we've got perfectly serviceable renditions of Smiley in the form of the 1980's Alec Guinness mini-series of both *Tinker* and *People*.

*And both are great. But I was really taken with Gary Oldman's Smiley and his sharp, suspenseful **Tinker**, though, and I'd love to see Oldman sweat it out by that bridge, waiting for K to finish his cigarette ...*

"Terry Bisson was also a Phoenix winner, also a Nebula and Hugo recipient for 'Bears Discover Fire,' and also – in Poul Anderson's wonderful term – a 'fine fellow.'" While "Bears Discover Fire" is a fine story, for simple humor, I prefer "They're Made Out of Meat." But for emotional impact, see his 2000 Hugo-nominated, Nebula-winner, "macs," which is about the value (or lack thereof) in retribution.

*New streaming advice: **Franklin** is quite good – great portrait of John Adams, and of course Michael Douglas is at his usual prime; **Under the Bridge** is very reminiscent of the grim Dennis Hopper film about teenage despair, **River's Edge**, and excellent; **Sugar** has the virtue of knocking me out of my chair in shock with the most bizarre twist I've seen in years. I loved it.*

*As it will be a while – perhaps 3 months – before I get around to doing another **Zine Dump** – it would probably be wise to publish here the letters I've already received about the last number.*
Not many, but good.

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I was just about to loc *The Zine Dump* 58, but thought, I've already done that one, haven't I? I downloaded the wrong issue! Time for something on issue 59, just gotta figure out what to say...

Don't do it! Kill *Zine Dump*, that is. It's the best zine in print that illustrates what's going on zinewise in this modern day. It's got all the names, and all the addresses, and all the details about what's inside. I tried to do fanzine reviews, but I failed miserably, and even got a couple of people angry with me.

I've been enjoying Dan Harper's *ABwoF*, and its first few issues. Any issue I can write most of a page of loc is a good zine for me. I admit, some zines I've received lately, I have no idea how to respond to it, mostly because they detail things I have absolutely no experience in.

One good thing you do here in this zine is tell us which issue of a particular zine is the latest one. I thought I'd been missing out on *Banana Wings*, but issue 79 is the latest one, even if it came out last December. Whew...

One thousand issues of any fanzine is a real milestone, so my congratulations to Instant Message and its editors at NESFA. I've told Garth Spencer that I would like to pass along (sounds better than get rid of) my fanzine collection, and I know Murray Moore would like to, as well. Difficult to do here in the Toronto-Mississauga area, so I am looking to find someone who might like them, like someone at a local university. We want to avoid The Dumpster, too.

I always enjoy what John Coker produces for First Fandom. Very soon, we should see the revised version, the First Fandom Foundation, and I would very much like to see what will be a new club. Again, I check to see if I have responded to the latest issue of *Warp*, and I have. They haven't put out an issue in some time.

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Thank you for the kind words about *ABwoF* in *Zine Dump* #59. I've been reading *Zine Dump* for years. It's a thrill to get such a positive mention in a zine that I've considered necessary reading for so many years. — This is a longwinded way of saying: Yes, *The Zine Dump* *does* matter. I like *Spartacus*, too, but *TZD* is essential reading.

I was sorry to read about your various health issues. Not to put too fine a point on it, Parkinson's sucks (my mother had it, though she died from something else). Your account of all your doctors' appointments reminds me of what an older friend told me — "Retirement is what happens between doctors' appointments."

Thanks for recommending the fan history Zoom meeting on YouTube. I had wanted to watch the one on women in fandom, but job and life got in the way. Going to go watch it now....



Spare your editor a thought this coming Moonday, July 20, 2024. Is my birthday... and a big one!